

Your safety. It's worth a second thought.



Buckle up!

Nobody plans a car crash – but we can plan to prevent them. Staying within speed limits, not driving if impaired by drugs or alcohol, and always wearing your safety belt can go a long way towards keeping you safer on the roads.

What happens in a car crash?

1. **Vehicle Collision:** The car hits a tree, a pole, or another vehicle.
2. **Human Collision:** The car stops, but anyone unbelted keeps moving. Your face hits the windshield or steering wheel; your ribcage hits the dashboard. Without your safety belt, you could be thrown from the vehicle.
3. **Internal Collision:** When you stop, your internal organs keep moving. Your brain can crash into your skull, and your heart, lungs, and kidneys can smash into each other or bone. *It's the internal collision that leads to serious injury and death.*

Safety belts increase your chances of avoiding death or serious injury in a crash by up to 50%.

- Think you can “brace yourself” in a crash? At just 35 mph, a 130 pound adult generates a force of 3,600 pounds. Nobody's arms are that strong!
- Just going to the store? Wear your safety belt – 80% of traffic fatalities occur within 25 miles of home and at speeds under 40 miles an hour.
- Airbags inflate at up to 200 mph and can seriously injure unbelted drivers and passengers.
- Safety belts prevent you from being knocked unconscious in a crash, improving your chances to escape and help other passengers.

Massachusetts law requires all drivers and passengers to buckle up.



Governor's Highway Safety Bureau
617.973.8900 TTY: 617.973.8925
www.mass.gov/ghsb

One-third of fatal crashes in Massachusetts are speed-related.

The faster you drive, the less time you have to avoid a crash.

- Speeding can really impact your wallet. The fine for driving 20 miles over the speed limit is a minimum of \$175, plus a surcharge on your car insurance for up to six years.
- Crash severity increases with vehicle speed. An impact at 35 mph is one-third more violent than one at 30 mph.
- Use common sense, even when you're in a hurry to get somewhere. Allow yourself a little extra time.



One-half of fatal crashes in Massachusetts are alcohol-related.

The legal blood alcohol content (BAC) limit in Massachusetts is .08 (.02 for under 21). Studies have shown that with a BAC of .08, nearly all drivers are significantly impaired, regardless of their gender or size. This is long before most people “feel drunk.” Prescription and illegal drugs also impair driving abilities.

A first-time DUI charge means:

- Your car will be towed and you will be taken to the police station.
- Whether you take a breathalyzer test or not, your license will be suspended.
- You will have to be bailed out of jail.
- If convicted, fines and legal fees will cost at least \$7,317.

Plan ahead: Arrange for a designated driver, or take a taxi or public transportation to avoid the dangers of impaired driving.

Give your safety a second thought.

- Be courteous – always use your signals and keep a reasonable distance behind the vehicle in front of you.
- Ignore aggressive drivers, and continue to drive courteously. Call the police if necessary. On a cell phone, dial *SP.
- Keep your eyes on the road – distracted driving is a factor in nearly half of all crashes.
- Don't drive when you're sleepy. Drowsy drivers are as dangerous as impaired drivers.

**For more on safe driving, go to
www.mass.gov/ghsb.**